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November 2014

CONFIRMING GOD'S WILL

Dear Friends,

As I have shared in the past, I was raised in a church that emphasized the need to accept Jesus as Savior in order to be born again. In that church we were also taught that God has a plan for every Christian and that we need to fulfill that plan. But I don't recall ever hearing anyone teach specifically how to discover that plan. If I were to summarize the impression I had, we were being told, "If it seems like the right thing to do, then it is God's will."

Later on I heard it taught that if something seems like the right thing to do, if it lines up with scripture and if the door is open to do it, then it is God's will. On the surface, that sounds really good. But I have discovered that Satan is more than willing to open doors that seem to be opportunities to serve God. Unless we are able to discern the difference, we could walk into a trap.

During a time of prayer, the Lord spoke to me and said, "Decisions you make that are right according to My Word are not necessarily the decisions you need to make that are in line with My will for your life." At first that might sound a little confusing. After all, aren't we supposed to do the things God has described in scripture? In the Bible we read about clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, visiting people in prison, going unto all the world to preach the gospel, and much more. Because God has identified all of those things as what He wants Christians to do, aren't we supposed to do them?

I have been in church services where guest preachers emphasized preaching the gospel to the lost with such intensity that people would feel guilty about not standing on street corners and evangelizing. I was always very uncomfortable in those services, feeling like I was failing God.

But just because something is right according to scripture does not mean it is specifically what God wants me to do. In 1 Corinthians chapter 12 the Body of Christ is compared to the human body. Every part of the human body has a role to play in order for the entire body to work efficiently. The same is true for the Body of Christ. You and I each have a role to play in God's plan for the entire Body of Christ so that His plan is fulfilled on earth. Just because one person is supposed to preach the gospel on street corners does not mean I am supposed to do the same.

Luke 16:19-31 presents the story of Lazarus, a sick beggar who was laid every day at the gate of the home of a very rich man. The rich man did nothing to help Lazarus. The day that both the rich man and Lazarus died, Lazarus was taken to Abraham's bosom and the rich man went to hell. A very good friend of mine was meditating on this passage when the Lord spoke to him and said, "You will not be held accountable for every needy person on earth. But you will be held accountable for every needy person I lay at your gate."

Read that again, for it is one of the most liberating words from God you could ever receive. It relieves us from the false responsibility of having to be everything to everyone and "do it all" in order to properly serve God and please Him. You see, the only things we are supposed to do is what God has told us to do.

Granted, there are some things in scripture which do not need further explanation, such as Hebrews 10:25, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." All Christians have a responsibility to be involved in the church where God wants them planted.

On the other hand, God is not going to instruct all Christians to go into prisons, or to get involved with a food pantry to feed the hungry, or to be sure needy people have clothes to wear. He is not going to instruct all Christians to get involved with everything He has declared in His Word as being a good thing to do.

In my years of ministry, Christians have come to me from time to time to discuss God's will for their lives. On occasion I have been asked something like, "Has God said anything to you about what He wants me to do?" Other times it is as though people are wanting me to lay hands on them, pray for them and impart some kind of calling into their lives; something I cannot do, for the gifts and callings come exclusively from God.

In Luke 6:12-16, Jesus spent all night in prayer. The next morning He gathered together all the people who were following Him. Out of that group, He called twelve and identified them as apostles. This fits perfectly in line with what is recorded in Ephesians 4:7-16 where Jesus is identified as the One who gives each Christian his or her ministry calling.

As we read the four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) we can see how Jesus gave the 12 apostles specific instructions concerning what He wanted them to do. But in order for them to receive those instructions, they had to be in His presence. He would lead them from city to city, then give them clear direction concerning tasks He wanted them to complete. However, they never knew exactly when He would assign those tasks to them; they had to stay with Him, follow Him and wait.

No doubt many Christians today wish they could have the same kind of interaction with Jesus. I, too, have thought it would be so wonderful to just sit down with Jesus and have Him walk me through God's plan for my life; to have Him give me clear-cut instructions for day-to-day living, just like He did with the apostles. The problem is, Jesus is no longer walking the earth as He did in the gospels. He has ascended back into Heaven and is seated at the right hand of our Heavenly Father.

This would seem to leave us at a severe disadvantage, almost as though God preferred the people living with Jesus during His time on Earth over those of us today who are born again as His children. However, nothing could be further from the truth.

In John 16:7 Jesus said, " Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." Jesus knew how much the apostles depended on Him. He knew they needed to hear His voice so they would know what He wanted them to do. Yet He said it

was expedient (profitable, advantageous) for them if He were to leave. No doubt they all saw absolutely no benefit whatsoever if He were to go away.

But Jesus told them if He did not leave, the Comforter would not come. This was an incredibly powerful clue for those hearing Him, just as it is for us today who read this verse. In essence, Jesus was saying this, "No matter how much I have done for you to this point, the Comforter will be able to do even more." So who is the Comforter? In John 14:26, Jesus identifies Him as being the Holy Ghost.

Referring to the Comforter as the Spirit of truth in John 14:17, Jesus explains that it is the Holy Spirit's desire to dwell in us. Think of the advantage this gives us over the apostles at that time. They had to travel from wherever they were to be with Jesus. They had to travel with Him wherever He went. If they did not do these things, they would never know what He wanted them to do. If an emergency arose at home, they had to leave where Jesus was to address the situation.

But to have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us means that no matter where we go, He is there to help. The apostles had to be sure they were in the exact, same physical location as Jesus if they wanted to receive instructions from Him. This is not true for us; when the Holy Spirit is dwelling within a Christian, being in a specific, physical location is not required to receive from Him. Here are just a few of the ways He will help:

- 1) He will teach us all things, John 14:26, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things..."
- 2) He will bring clarification to all the things Jesus taught, John 14:26, "...he shall...bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. "
- 3) He will reveal what is truth, John 16:13, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth..."
- 4) He will receive from Jesus and pass it on to us, John 16:14, "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you."

As it pertains to receiving direction from God, The Holy Spirit will:

- 1) Teach us all things about what God wants us to do.
- 2) Give us clarification of God's will for our daily life.
- 3) Reveal the truth of God's call for our lives.
- 4) Receive from Jesus His instructions and pass them on to us.

Yes, it would be so incredibly wonderful to be in the literal, physical presence of Jesus and discuss with Him what He wants us to do each day. But Jesus has explained in scripture that it is better for us to learn to depend on the Comforter for this information. Consider it from this perspective: If we ask Jesus to tell us what He desires, He delegates the responsibility of answering to the Holy Spirit. After all, this is what Jesus said the Holy Spirit has been assigned to do for us.

I have found that the most effective way to receive this information from the Holy Spirit is to pray in tongues. This is a supernatural language the Holy Spirit gives to those who receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. God has made it explicitly clear that we are developing ourselves spiritually and making it easier to hear His voice as we pray in the Spirit.

- 1) We are in direct communication with God (1 Corinthians 14:2)
- 2) We are edifying ourselves spiritually (1 Corinthians 14:4)
- 3) Our spirit is praying directly to God, bypassing our natural mind (1 Corinthians 14:14)
- 4) We are building ourselves up on faith (Jude 1:20)
- 5) The Holy Spirit is praying through us according to God's perfect will (Romans 8:26-27)

Spiritual growth and progress was taking place in my life before I began praying in tongues. But after I began praying regularly in the Spirit, my spiritual development accelerated quite noticeably. I am now able to hear God more clearly than ever before in my life. I have seen healings and miracles take place in people when I have prayed for them. My understanding of scripture has increased exponentially. God's will for my life is more clear to me than ever before.

At one time in my life I did not believe in being Baptized in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. But I have spent almost the last 20 years praying in tongues and experienced the results firsthand; no one will ever be able to convince me it is not for Christians today or that such prayer does not produce results.

As you read this, you may be thinking, "I am born again, but I have never received the miracle gift of praying in tongues. I would sure like to have that gift and experience the results it produces." If that is you, I have a special gift for you.

During a church service I was ministering to a person about being filled with the Holy Spirit and receiving the gift of tongues. That altar service was recorded and it is available on a CD. It is only about 15 minutes long. You will hear me explain about receiving this gift, then lead the person in prayer to be filled with the Holy Spirit and begin speaking in tongues. As you listen, imagine you are the one in that altar service. Follow along and pray with us.

This CD has been sent to many people, including some who are in prison. Our ministry has received many reports of Christians being filled with the Holy Spirit and receiving their prayer language of tongues. Some, after listening, have even ministered to their friends for them to receive the gift of tongues.

There is no charge to receive this CD and you are welcome to make copies for others. All I can do is encourage you concerning the incredible effectiveness of praying in the Spirit and the tremendous impact it will have on your life. After all, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit

to be our personal teacher and guide; why wouldn't we want to interact with Him - the Third Person of the Godhead - as much as possible?

In a manner of speaking, God sent the Holy Spirit to act as a type of intermediary. He will only move in our lives according to scripture and the Father's will. He convicts the lost of their need for Jesus, then He works with Christians to help them conform to the image of the glory of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18). Next to salvation, the Baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues is the greatest gift God has given me. I can honestly say that I would not be where I am today in my walk with God if it weren't for praying in tongues.

If you have received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues, be encouraged to make praying in the Spirit a part of your daily life. If you have not yet received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues, request the CD I am offering and begin an incredible journey into God's presence that is far beyond what anyone can put into words!

May your life be filled with the peace that passes all understanding,

Jim

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Don't forget that our Spring Prayer and Power Conference is Sunday, March 22 through Friday, March 27. Yes, it is only November, but March will be here very soon. I have already been contacted by many people in the U.S and other countries such as Nigeria, Dubai, Ireland, Canada, Kenya, and others who have expressed their plans to attend. For more information, please visit our web site, www.jmmgrace.com.

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